

the administration. The Sedition act quickly followed the Alien act.* It provided heavy fines and imprisonment for any person who should conspire to* oppose the United States Government or the laws thereof, or should print or publish any "false, scandalous or malicious writings against the Government, Congress or the President, intended to bring disrepute or hatred upon, o>r stir up sedition against them." The dominant party did not dare to aggravate the severity of these provisions by conferring upon the President the scope and power which they had given him in the Alien law. It was necessary that, in sedition cases, the defendants should be convicted of the charge before a court of the United States. The Federal courts thus came immediately into prominence, for in the opinion of the Republicans, they were to be the sure and active instruments of partisan persecution.

Jefferson had left for home before the passage of the Sedition law in its original form. He had throughout the session closely followed the trend of events, and he left Philadelphia impressed with what he regarded as the intemperate language and conduct of the President. He saw, however, that the country had come to look more rationally upon the differences with France. To John Taylor he wrote in a most hopeful strain: "There is a most respectable part of our State who have been enveloped in the X. Y. Z. delusion, and who destroy our unanimity for the present moment. This disease of the imagination will pass over, because the patients are essentially Republican. Indeed, the doctor is now on his way to cure it in the guise of a tax-gatherer. But give time for the medicine to work, and for the repetition of stronger doses which must be administered. * * * Nothing but excessive taxation can get us along; and this will carry reason and reflection to every man's door, and particularly in the hour of election."

During this summer the leaders of the opposition had looked around for some means of formal and effectual resistance to the policy of the administration, "finding themselves," to use their

*See Alien and Sedition Laws, page 137. Also Kentucky Resolutions, page 282.